



# NEWS RELEASE

OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY  
WESTERN DISTRICT OF MISSOURI

**TODD P. GRAVES**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

PROJECT CEASEFIRE  
**SPRINGFIELD, WEST PLAINS FELONS SENTENCED  
FOR ILLEGAL POSSESSION OF FIREARMS**

**SPRINGFIELD, Mo.** – Todd P. Graves, United States Attorney for the Western District of Missouri, announced that a Springfield, Mo., man and a West Plains, Mo., man were sentenced in federal court today, in separate and unrelated cases, for being felons in possession of firearms. Today's sentencings, Graves said, mark additional progress under Project Ceasefire, the district's ongoing anti-crime initiative.

\* **Chad O. Nelson**, 21, of Springfield, was sentenced by U.S. District Judge Richard E. Dorr this afternoon to six years and five months in federal prison without parole.

On Jan. 15, 2004, **Nelson** pleaded guilty to being a felon in possession of a firearm. By pleading guilty, **Nelson** admitted that he was in possession of a Lorcin .25 caliber pistol on April 7, 2003, in Springfield. Under federal law, Graves explained, it is illegal for anyone who has been convicted of a felony to be in possession of any firearm or ammunition. **Nelson** has two 2001 criminal felony convictions for burglary and one 2001 criminal felony conviction for stealing.

**Nelson** was originally charged in an indictment that was returned by a federal grand jury on May 7, 2003, in Springfield.

This case was prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney James J. Kelleher. It was investigated by the Springfield, Mo., Police Department and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives.

\* **Walter Dale Wilkerson**, 40, of West Plains, was sentenced by U.S. District Judge Richard E. Dorr this afternoon to three years and one month in federal prison without parole.

On Nov. 24, 2003, **Wilkerson** pleaded guilty to being a felon in possession of a firearm. By pleading guilty, **Wilkerson** admitted that he was in possession of a Savage Arms 12-gauge shotgun; a Mossberg 12-gauge shotgun; a New England Firearms 12-gauge shotgun; a Noble 20-gauge shotgun; a Marlin .22 caliber rifle; a Winchester .22 caliber rifle; a Bryco Jennings .380 caliber pistol; a Ruger .22 caliber rifle; a Ruger .243 caliber rifle; and a Remington .243 caliber rifle on March 27, 2003, in West Plains. Under federal law, Graves explained, it is illegal for anyone who has been convicted of a felony to be in possession of any firearm or ammunition. **Wilkerson** has a 1992 criminal felony conviction for theft of property and a 1998 criminal felony conviction for possession of methamphetamine.

**Wilkerson** was originally charged in an indictment that was returned by a federal grand jury on Aug. 13, 2003, in Springfield.

This case was prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Douglas D. Gaston. It was investigated by the West Plains, Mo., Police Department and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives.

#### **Project Ceasefire**

Project Ceasefire, launched in October 1999, is a cooperative initiative by federal and local law enforcement and the Kansas City Crime Commission that targets for federal prosecution persons who unlawfully use or possess firearms.

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This news release, as well as additional information about the office of the United States Attorney for the Western District of Missouri, is available on-line at

[www.usdoj.gov/usao/mow](http://www.usdoj.gov/usao/mow)